

# Path a Selectmen nix bike path

## no go

### Selectmen nix bike path pitch

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This week, Duxbury selectmen voted 2-1 not to support a Town Meeting article for \$56,000 to design a bike path along Tremont Street/Route 3A.

Selectman Betsy Sullivan said that while she supported the article in concept, the path's proposed location is a problem. The Duxbury Rural and Historical Society, which owns the woods across from the Mayflower Cemetery, is against giving the town an easement for the path.

"Well over a third of this land is owned by a group that is not in favor of allowing this," said Sullivan. "To me that seems like a show stopper."

Bike Path committee member Jeff Lewis said the path could be placed on the other side of Tremont Street, which is mostly owned by the town. Or it could end at Prior Farm Road, he said. All of the abutting property owners with the exception of the Rural and Historical Society and one landowner north of Prior Farm are supportive of the path plan, said Lewis.

"Even if it truncated at Prior Farm Road, it would still be a worthwhile project," said Lewis.

Martecchini did not support the article because he had issues with what the \$56,000 in CPA funds was actually going to produce, and he felt that relying on federal and state funding for the bike path was too optimistic as it would take a long time to see any of that money.

Selectmen Chairman Jon Witten voted to support the proposal. Final action on whether this article receives funding rests with Town Meeting voters. Annual Town Meeting begins March 14.

A draft plan from the Bike and Sidewalk Committee shows the proposed path running along Tremont Street from Chestnut Street to Depot Street. It would pass by the senior center, fire station and terminate at the town hall. The path would link with the Chestnut Street sidewalk for access to Hall's Corner and it would pass Mayflower Street, where travelers could connect with the town forest and Audubon and other conservation land.

The article is being proposed by the Community Preservation Committee and the Sidewalk/Bike Path Committee. Money for it will come from the Community Preservation Act's general account, which can fund recreational use projects.

The CPA can be used for designing the multi-use path for bikers and pedestrians, but not for constructing it because it is not a land acquisition, said Holly Morris, CPC chairman. Construction costs are estimated at \$400,000 for the half-mile path, and the committee would seek funding from federal and state transportation funds and private sources.

According to a bike path committee document, the \$56,000 would pay for a topographical survey, right of way plans, engineering, and public outreach. The committee is planning to receive \$14,000 of donated engineering time from Lewis and \$10,000 of donated outreach time from

volunteers.

Martecchini, who is an engineer, said that it sounded like the end product would be plans and construction bid documents, but he didn't believe the amount was enough money included in the article for that type of plan. Also, he felt that since the article did not contain funding for legal fees for acquiring easements along abutters' properties, the plans created would not be able to be used for construction bidding.

"I'd argue that you can't do right-of-way plans without money for legal services," said Martecchini.

Martecchini was also concerned that the path would never receive construction funding.

"The reality is there are no funds to build anything unless you can fund this 100 percent outside the town budget," said Martecchini, adding that obtaining federal and state grants could take many years and that it is a very competitive process.

The Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously in favor of the bike path article. Morris said it is common to use CPA funds for designing recreational projects. She said that unless the design is funded, the path can't move forward and her committee felt it was worth having Town Meeting voters decide the issue.

Community Preservation Committee member Lynne Devnew said: "We were told there were many private funding sources. They convinced us we were not just buying a design."

Bike Path committee member John Taft said these funds would pay for a survey that would determine which side of the Tremont Street the bike path should go, which was the first step. Committee member Nancy Johnson said she was hopeful that the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society might change its mind on the easement, as it was asked about this issue two years ago.